

Message Text

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STATE FOR HITCHCOCK, CU/EA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OEXC, JA

SUBJECT: NATIONAL SCIENCE MUSEUM-ASAHI SHIMBUN BICENTENNIAL
TECHNOLOGY EXHIBIT

SUMMARY: STATE AND/OR USIA ASKED UNDERLINE TO SMITHSONIAN
SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MAJOR EXHIBITION WHICH JAPAN'S MOST
IMPORTANT SCIENCE MUSEUM AND LARGEST NEWSPAPER WISH TO
PRESENT DURING 1976 END SUMMARY

1. NATIONAL SCIENCE MUSEUM (MR. SOICHIRO TSURUTA, HEAD OF
PROGRAM DEPARTMENT) HAS NOW GIVEN EMBASSY ENGLISH VERSION
OF THEIR TENTATIVE EXHIBITION LIST FOR PROJECTED QTE INFLUENCE
OF AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY ON JAPAN UNQTE EXHIBIT WHICH MUSEUM
HOPES PRESENT DURING 1976 WITH SUPPORT FROM ASAHI SHIMBUN.
EMBASSY INFORMED THAT LIST WAS SENT TO SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
(HINDLE, DIRECTOR MUSEUM HISTORY AND TECHNOLOGY AND PERROT,
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR MUSEUM PROGRAMS.) HITCHCOCK AND
FORSTER FAMILIAR BACKGROUND THIS PROJECT.

2. NATIONAL SCIENCE MUSEUM PROPOSES THREE PRINCIPAL
THEMES: (1) JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES; (2) AMERICA
AS AN ORIGIN OF THE TECHNOLOGY OF MODERN LIVING; AND
(3) TOWARD THE FUTURE. SPECIFIC AREAS OF CONCENTRATION
INCLUDE EARLY INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY ON JAPAN,
THE PERRY ERA, U.S. CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIBERS AND PLASTICS,
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FOOD TECHNOLOGY, ARCHITECTURE AND CONSTRUCTION, ELECTRIC-

ITY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS, PRINTING AND PHOTOGRAPHY, TRANSPORTATION, MACHINE TOOLS, MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY, NUCLEAR ENERGY, SPACE, AND COMPUTERS.

3. TOTAL SHOPPING LIST IDENTIFIES ABOUT 250 ITEMS, NOT ALL OF WHICH WOULD, OF COURSE, BE INCLUDED IN FINAL EXHIBITION. SCIENCE MUSEUM LISTS ABOUT FORTY PER CENT OF ITEMS AS AVAILABLE IN ITS OWN COLLECTION. MOST OF REMAINDER WOULD BE REQUESTED FROM SMITHSONIAN WITH PERHAPS TEN PER CENT FROM OTHER COLLECTIONS IN U.S. SUBSTANTIAL PROPORTION OF MUSEUM'S NEEDS COULD BE MET THROUGH MODELS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND COPIES. SOME OF ITEMS TO WHICH MUSEUM GIVES HIGH PRIORITY WHICH WOULD BE REQUESTED FROM SMITHSONIAN INCLUDE: FRANKLIN'S PRINTING PRESS, COPY OF FIRST US-JAPAN TREATY OF AMITY, SINGER OR HOWE SEWING MACHINE, WHITNEY COTTON GIN, MCCORMICK HARVESTER, EARLY MERCURY LAMP, WESTINGHOUSE TRANSFORMER, EDISON STOCK TICKER, REMINGTON TYPEWRITER, EARLY MOVIE CAMERA, MODEL OF FULTON'S STEAMSHIP, EARLY CARS (MODEL T, ETC.) EXAMPLES OR PHOTOS EARLY FODDARD ROCKETS, FIRST U.S. COMPUTERS, EARLY COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE, ETC. MUSEUM'S PLANNING AND RESEARCH APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN THOROUGH AND THOUGHTFUL.

4. REVIEW OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN SMITHSONIAN AND NATIONAL SCIENCE MUSEUM SUGGESTS THAT A MISUNDERSTANDING MAY HAVE ARISEN. NATIONAL SCIENCE MUSEUM'S INTEREST IS IN OBJECTS, NOT AVAILABLE IN ITS OWN COLLECTION, WHICH IT WILL USE AS PART OF AN EXHIBIT TO BE PLANNED AND MOUNTED IN TOKYO. TOKYO MUSEUM IS FLEXIBLE REGARDING SUBSTITUTION OF AVAILABLE ITEMS FOR OTHERS WHICH MAY NOT BE READILY OBTAINABLE. PURPOSE IS TO SHOW INFLUENCE OF U.S. TECHNOLOGY, NOT NECESSARILY TO DISPLAY HISTORIC FIRSTS. IMPRESSION MAY HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO SMITHSONIAN THAT NATIONAL SCIENCE MUSEUM SEEKING A COMPLETE EXHIBIT WHICH WOULD BE PUT TOGETHER IN THE U.S. AND SENT MORE OR LESS IN TOTO TO JAPAN FOR DISPLAY.

5. IN ANY CASE, EMBASSY FEELS IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF AGENCY AND/OR CU COULD APPROACH SMITHSONIAN AS SOON AS CONVENIENT TO UNDERLINE IMPORTANCE OF THIS EXHIBITION.
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JAPAN'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER AND ITS MOST PRESTIGIOUS EDUCATIONAL MUSEUM HAVE JOINED IN PROPOSING THIS PROJECT, WHICH WOULD BE ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL EVENTS IN JAPAN IN CONNECTION WITH U.S. BICENTENNIAL. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM ASAHI WOULD MEAN WH U.S. CAN OBTAIN EXCEPTIONAL OPPORTUNITY WITH MINIMUM COST AND EFFORT ON U.S. SIDE.

NATIONAL SCIENCE MUSEUM'S INTENTION TO TREAT TOPIC IN
CONTEXT OF U.S.-JAPAN INTERACTION, RATHER THAN TO DISPLAY
U.S. TECHNOLOGY IN THE ABSTRACT, MAY MAKE ASSEMBLY OF
ITEMS SOMEWHAT MORE COMPLEX BUT WILL INCREASE GREATLY
THE IMPACT OF THE EXHIBITION UPON JAPANESE OPINIONS
ABOUT THE UNITED STATES. IF THIS EXHIBITION COMES OFF,
IT WOULD PROVIDE EXTREMELY USEFUL SUPPORT FOR BROAD U.S.
OBJECTIVES IN JAPAN. IF IT CANNOT BE CARRIED THROUGH,
IT WOULD MEAN THE LOSS OF A VERY VALUABLE OPPORTUNITY
WHICH CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO RECUR.

6. WE ARE FORWARDING COPIES OF FULL LIST AND NATIONAL
SCIENCE MUSEUM DESCRIPTION.

7. AS FORSTER KNOWS, ASAHI WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT
FAMILIAR WITH THIS PROJECT, IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF USIA
OR CU KEPT HIM INFORMED OF SMITHSONIAN REACTIONS, SO HE
CAN INFORM ASAHI DIRECTLY, WHILE WE FOLLOW UP IN PARALLEL.

8. PLEASE INFORM BY CABLE OUTCOME AGENCY/CU APPROACH
TO SMITHSONIAN.
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